

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – EXECUTIVE OFFICE
JANUARY 18, 2023**

ITEM 4

SUBJECT

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN.

DISCUSSION

The Racial Equity Action Plan is a compilation of goals, actions, and metrics intended to advance the State Water Board's efforts to create a future where we equitably preserve, enhance, and restore California's water resources and drinking water for all Californians, regardless of race, and where race is not a predictor of professional outcomes for Water Boards employees.

On August 18, 2020, State Water Board staff presented an informational item to the State Water Board on a framework for addressing racial equity. The State Water Board acknowledged the historic effects of institutional racism that must be confronted throughout government and directed staff to develop a priority plan of action.

In fall 2020, State Water Board's Executive Director, Eileen Sobeck, convened a Water Boards Racial Equity Team with the purpose of advancing racial equity both for the communities that the Water Boards serve, and internally within the organization. The Water Boards Racial Equity Team is comprised of Water Boards staff representing all levels of the organization and includes support staff, engineers, scientists, technologists, and executives. The Racial Equity Team has been tasked with three major priorities: 1) establish a foundation of internal and external engagement that values listening and collaboration to drive action; 2) draft a resolution on racial equity to be considered for adoption by the State Water Board and leveraged by the nine Regional Water Boards to adopt their own resolutions; and 3) develop racial equity strategies and action plans to drive efforts for the coming years.

The Water Boards reached a major milestone on November 16, 2021, when the State Water Board adopted the Racial Equity Resolution, "Condemning Racism, Xenophobia, Bigotry, and Racial Injustice and Strengthening Commitment to Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Anti-Racism" ([Resolution No. 2021-0050](#)). The Resolution directs staff to develop a plan of action to advance racial equity within the Water Boards.

In March 2022, the Water Boards Racial Equity Team began working with a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant to articulate a vision and strategic directions that serve as the framework for our action planning.

Throughout spring 2022, Water Boards staff, community partners, tribes, and communities impacted by racial inequities began to identify draft actions to incorporate

into a Racial Equity Action Plan. In April 2022, the Water Boards began soliciting requests for government-to-government tribal consultations. And in May 2022, community partners and State Water Board management and staff came together for visioning and strategizing sessions, as well as a series of action planning workshops.

The Water Boards Racial Equity Team compiled draft actions through feedback from members of the public, tribes, and Water Boards staff and leadership and partnered with community organizations to host four public workshops in July 2022 to present the draft action ideas. The Racial Equity Team incorporated feedback received during the July 2022 workshops and Water Boards staff and released the draft for public comment on September 23, 2022.

On October 19, 2022, the Racial Equity Team presented the draft Racial Equity Action Plan at a State Water Board workshop. That version of the draft action plan was posted online for public review and comment on September 23, 2022, and comments were accepted through October 24, 2022. The Water Boards Racial Equity Team incorporated resulting feedback and worked with leadership from State Water Board Divisions and Offices to finalize the draft.

The State Water Board will not take action to approve or deny the Racial Equity Action Plan, which was designed to be a living document that is updated periodically through Board and community engagement. California Native American tribes can continue to request government-to-government consultations to provide feedback and guidance on this work on an ongoing basis. Other interested parties may still provide general comments about the Water Boards' racial equity work by emailing racialequity@waterboards.ca.gov. Although this is an action plan for the State Water Board, the Regional Water Boards have strongly supported the State Water Board's racial equity efforts and may leverage this plan to inform their own racial equity work, as they have the State Water Board's Racial Equity Resolution.

POLICY ISSUE

This is an informational item to present the 2023-2025 Racial Equity Action Plan. The State Water Board will not approve or deny the Racial Equity Action Plan. However, staff will update the Board on its implementation at least annually.

FISCAL IMPACT

No additional fiscal impact to currently budgeted program resources.

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

The State Water Board will not take action at this public meeting; there is no Regional Water Board impact at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The State Water Board will not take action at this public meeting; there is no staff recommendation at this time.